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Sports

Walker sets sights on Hogs, not A&M receiving record

By Doug Hall
 Sports Writer

At 5-11, 185 pounds, and with speed that is more comparable to a turtle than a hare, Shea Walker is not your typical major college football wide receiver.

But, he will, in all probability, be Texas A&M's all-time leading pass receiver after Saturday's 2:30 p.m. game with the Arkansas Razorbacks in Little Rock's War Memorial Stadium.

Walker, a senior three-year letterman out of Port Arthur, Jefferson, needs only five catches against the Hogs to surpass Jeff Nelson's current record of 92 catches.

But for Walker to break that record, the Kevin Murray-led offense must be able to beat the Southwest Conference's third-ranked secondary, the Aggies, who have averaged 240.1 yards per game through the air this season, will have their work cut out for them because the Razorbacks have surrendered only 156.3 yards per game via the pass.

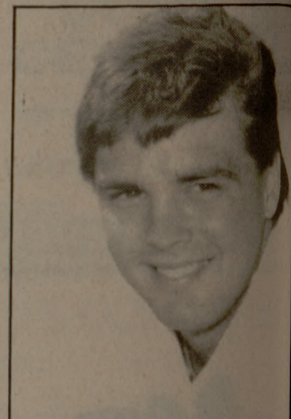
Something is going to give. There has been much speculation that the Aggies could come out flat against the Razorbacks because of the week-long break in their schedule, but Walker thinks just the opposite.

"The week off has definitely helped us out," he said. "There were quite a few of us that were banged up and bruised after the SMU game. That week gave us a chance to catch our breath and a couple of more days to watch film and get ready for them."

Walker also isn't worried about the Aggies lacking incentive to beat the Hogs, even though the Aggies' second straight SWC title was virtually locked up with Baylor's 29-14 victory over the Hogs in Waco last Saturday.

"I'm not worried about (the record). It would be nice to break, or hold the record, but it means more to me to be in a position to hold our own destiny, unlike last year when we had to rely on other teams to put us in that position."

— A&M wide receiver
 Shea Walker



Shea Walker

"Their loss doesn't affect us," Walker said. "We've still got three games to play. Mathematically, we know that there are a lot of teams that could go. We've got to play our games one week at a time, just like we have all year."

"In the Southwest Conference, you can't afford to do that (look ahead). UT has a lot of talent, Arkansas has a lot of talent, and two of our three games are on the road."

Walker, however, is not the only Aggie receiver in pursuit of Nelson's record. Tight end Rod Bernstine, who leads the SWC this year with 46 catches, but trails Walker's 88 career catches by two, also is trying to place his name in the Aggie record book.

"Rod is a great receiver," said Walker, who is third on the team with 30 receptions, one behind Keith Woodside. "I don't have any different feelings toward Rod making all those catches. He works hard in practice. I think he feels the same way about me."

Walker also said having Bernstine, running back Woodside

and receivers Tony Thomas and Rod Harris all able to make clutch catches, the Aggie offense much more diversified — a greater threat to opponents.

"We have a lot of talent," Walker said, "and we need to be more efficient to spread it around."

As far as Walker's concern about A&M receiving record taking seat to a productive offense championship team.

"I'm not worried about (the record)," he said. "It would be nice to break, or hold the record, but it means more to me to be in a position to hold our own destiny, unlike last year when we had to rely on other teams to put us in that position."

From a personal standpoint, Walker said he's still without judgment on whether the year has been a success.

"Personally, I always feel like my hardest critic," he said. "I feel like I could do better."

"After Thanksgiving, I'll know what kind of year it's been."

A&M hopes to avoid '75 scenario

By Tim Stanfield
 Sports Writer

"Dec. 6, 1975: A day that will live in infamy for all Texas A&M football fans."

That could well have been the only way to describe the horror of Aggies everywhere, as they watched their previously undefeated team get humiliated on national television by the Arkansas Razorbacks, 31-6.

Coach Emory Ballard's 1975 A&M team was 10-0 and ranked No. 2 in The Associated Press and United Press International polls when it took the field that day in War Memorial Stadium in Little Rock.

In a move similar to the 1969-70 Arkansas-Texas shootouts, the game had been moved to the first Saturday in December for TV purposes.

ABC billed the Aggies as "a definite contender for the national title."

Led by a vicious defense that included 10 starters who would be named to various All-Southwest Conference teams, A&M was a huge favorite to beat Arkansas.

But little did anyone know just how badly things would turn out for Ballard's "Next Year's Champions."

Starting quarterback Mike Jay had been injured the previous week against Texas and could not play. Fullback George Woodard reinjured a pulled leg muscle in pregame drills.

Since A&M's wishbone offense featured the fullback and depended on the quarterback to run the offense smoothly, that left A&M virtually unarmed.

The hosts dominated the A&M offense and showed flashes of being able to dent the nearly-impregnable Aggie defense.

When place-kicker Tony Franklin

SWC Football

	Conference				OP	All Games			
	W	L	T	Pts		W	L	T	Pts
Texas A&M	5	0	0	179	90	7	1	0	260
Arkansas	4	2	0	151	104	7	2	0	248
Baylor	4	2	0	180	110	6	3	0	238
SMU	4	2	0	172	114	5	4	0	232
Texas Tech	4	2	0	147	153	6	3	0	213
Texas	3	2	0	109	92	4	4	0	168
TCU	1	5	0	130	180	3	6	0	233
Rice	1	5	0	99	232	2	6	0	133
Houston	0	6	0	60	146	1	8	0	105

missed a chip-shot field goal attempt in the first quarter, it gave the sellout crowd even more reason to scream.

And the Hog fans did. "Hey, hey, ho, ho, Arkansas in the Cotton Bowl" was the cry, and it got louder as the scoreless game progressed.

Late in the first half, Arkansas quarterback Scott Bull hit wide receiver Teddy Campbell with a touchdown pass to break the drought.

With the 7-0 halftime lead, the Hogs kept pressure on the A&M defense early in the third quarter. Midway in that period, the Aggie defensive unit cracked and ended any hopes for success.

Arkansas set up a touchdown run with a long pass play and upped the score to 14-0.

Ballard inserted freshman quarterback Keith Baker into the lineup on A&M's next possession, but Baker fumbled the ensuing snap and the Razorbacks recovered. The resulting field goal put Arkansas ahead 17-0.

Shipman re-entered the game, and two possessions later was responsible for the play that summed up the game for both sides.

From inside the Aggies' 10-yard line, Shipman took the snap but was

hit hard and fumbled the ball at the end zone.

As he futilely crawled on his hands toward the ball, no fewer than Arkansas players beat him to the ball. That touchdown put the Aggies at 24-0, leaving the Hogs and fans overwhelmed with joy.

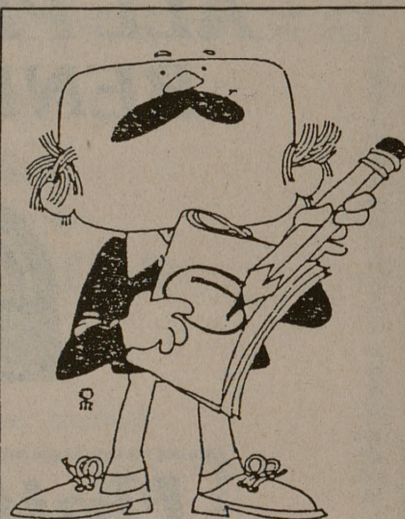
For the humiliated Aggies, it was a long night's journey reached a full decade in length for the 1985 A&M squad who clutch games and the championship.

Coach Jackie Sherrill's team would suffer two humiliating losses in Arkansas before last year's team beat the Razorbacks in Kyle Field on the way to the title.

Now A&M rides into "Rock" leading the league in games. But this Aggie team doesn't know the meaning of "quit" — an offense that is one-dimensioned. Certainly A&M should win at Cotton again in January.

But then the Aggies should have won that one 11 years ago, too.

Now is the time to put those awful memories tied to the Hog fans surely will remember Aggies of "Hey, hey, ho, ho, Arkansas in the Cotton Bowl."



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